

Preliminary Amendment
Serial No. 09/062,255

wherein the first engagement member is an active engagement member that is movable, relative to the one of the sole of the snowboard boot or the binding to which the first engagement member is mounted, between a first state wherein the first engagement member does not engage the second engagement member and a second state wherein the first engagement member engages the second engagement member to inhibit lifting of the toe area of the boot from the binding during riding, and

wherein the active engagement member is automatically movable, in response to the rider stepping out of the binding, from the second state to the first state.

51. (Amended) A snowboard boot adapted for use with a binding to mount the snowboard boot to a snowboard, the binding including a first engagement member, the snowboard boot comprising:

a sole; and

a second engagement member [supported by] mounted to the sole to releasably engage the first engagement member;[,]

wherein the first and second engagement members include an active engagement member and a compatible engagement member that is engageable with the active engagement member, the active engagement member being movable, relative to the one of the binding or the sole to which the active engagement member is mounted, from a first state wherein the active engagement member does not engage the compatible engagement member to a second state wherein the active engagement member engages the compatible engagement member; and

wherein the second engagement member [including engagement means for releasably engaging the first engagement member, the engagement means including means for] automatically [disengaging] disengages from the first engagement member in response to the snowboard boot stepping out of engagement with the binding.

52. (Amended) The snowboard boot of claim 51, wherein the second engagement member [further includes means for] automatically [engaging] engages the first engagement

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member in response to the snowboard boot stepping into the binding, and wherein the second engagement member underlies a toe area of the snowboard boot.

53. (Amended) The snowboard boot of claim 52, wherein the second engagement [means further includes means for resisting] member resists release from the first engagement member in response to a lifting force generated at the toe area of the snowboard boot.

54. (Amended) A snowboard binding to mount a snowboard boot to a snowboard, the snowboard boot including a first engagement member, the snowboard binding comprising:

a base; and

a second engagement member, mounted to the base, that is adapted to mate with the first engagement member to releasably engage the snowboard boot to the binding, the second engagement member being an active engagement member that is movable relative to the base between a first state wherein the second engagement member does not engage the first engagement member and a second state wherein the second engagement member engages the first engagement member to inhibit lifting of the boot from the binding during riding, and wherein the active engagement member is automatically movable, in response to the rider stepping out of the binding, from the second state to the first state.

74. (Amended) A method of interfacing a first engagement member on a snowboard boot with a second engagement member, on a snowboard binding, that is engageable with the first engagement member to mount the snowboard boot to a snowboard, wherein at least one of the first and second engagement members is an active engagement member that is moveable, relative to the one of the snowboard boot or the snowboard binding on which the active engagement member is located, between an open position and a closed position, the method comprising a step of:

(A) stepping the snowboard boot out of the snowboard binding so that the active engagement member automatically moves from the closed position to the open position.